

IV. 21 Aug 72

K 23

NORTH VIETNAM

ALLEGED IMPRESSIONS OF RAMSEY CLARK ON HIS THANH HOA VISIT

Hanoi in English to American Servicemen Involved in the Indochina War 1300 GMT
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[For an earlier version of this broadcast see page K 3 of the 16 August DAILY REPORT]

[Text] Here is U.S. lawyer Ramsey Clark telling his impressions after he visited Thanh Hoa Province, North Vietnam. [Follows recorded male voice with American accent]

The chief impression that I get from this trip, I believe is, umm, the enormous contrast between peace and war. Umm, last night, yesterday afternoon and this morning we spent in a beautiful and peaceful little village of 2,900 human beings. The village has been there for more than 500 years. They call it (Phu Min). You can see the great progress that the people are making there. You can see the pride that they have and equality of their lives. You can see the health of the children and the love of the families and the productivity of the land, the growth of education and opportunity.

It's been a very wonderful experience for me to be able to spend that time in the village. We visited six or seven different homes of families and were received with great friendship and generosity, uhh, on each occasion. Then this morning, in the starkest contrast, we--we saw what war is and what it does. We visited the hamlet of (Xuan Ai) and (Thieu Hoa) village.

And this hamlet had been heavily bombed, umm--23 of its people were killed just last April. While they were beginning to rebuild the dikes, umm, were lined with people and carts bringing lumber and other building materials in to rebuild the homes. You could see not only the devastation to the land and the homes and the--the farm areas, the rice paddies, but you could see the suffering etched in the faces of the people. You could see how they wondered how this could possibly happen to their peaceful village, uhh--but suddenly, at 3 am one morning, without any warning and by people they never knew and will never know, be bombed into oblivion. [as heard]

IV. 21 Aug 72

K 24

NORTH VIETNAM

So I believe this province, uhh, shows as few others perhaps, uhh, the terrible contrast, umm, between war and peace. It also shows, umm, that the indomitable spirit of a people can never be overcome. This was apparent in both villages. In the village of (Phu Min) which had not been bombed uhh, you could feel the enormous energy and pride and determination of the people to build a land, uhh, 10 times more beautiful but among those in the village that had been bombed--and we met two young sons who were orphaned by the bombing--one 16 years old, one 15 years old--you could find this fierce determination to carry on until there is a time of freedom and independence that is acceptable to the people.

After our visit the--the reality of what you've seen gives, umm, a much deeper meaning to, umm, what you believe, and umm, to can come from reading or seeing pictures or hearing about a--a place from others who've been there, uhh, one has to be deeply impressed with, umm, the people of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam.

I've wondered, umm, for many years, what it was that created such a--an almost fierce determination, umm, to prevail. What, umm--what it was that--that drives, umm, the people of this country through all these long, whol--hard, uhh, tortured years of war, and how, in spite of the suffering and hardship and death, they seem to grow stronger and more determined.

Having been here, umm, and visited, umm, in a number of the provinces, uhh, and seen the major cities, travelled over a thousand kilometers, umm, between cities and villages by now, walked the streets of, uhh, the cities, umm, alone and with others, walked umm, the pathways of the villages and along the dikes and canals, uhh, alone and with others, watched the people and talked with them to the extent that I've been able to, umm, since I do not speak Vietnamese and few here speak English, I have to, umm, umm, believe that, umm, uhh, the determination of the people, and the strength of the people, uhh, uhh, comes from their conviction that, umm, this land and these people, uhh, are served by their government, uhh, that there is justice, uhh, equality here.

My experience tells me that, umm, as has been told by Aristotle that the chief and universal cause of the revolutionary impulse is the desire for equality. You see no internal conflict in this country--I've seen none. Uhh, you feel a unity in spirit. I doubt very seriously that I could, umm, walk in safety in Saigon or the cities or villages in South Vietnam, as I have here, because of, umm, the division and the confusion and the lack of faith and belief there.

I think the people here have seen progress in a short period of time. I haven't talked with, umm, an older man or woman, uhh, for very long who hasn't described how much better his or her children are being educated than they were as children. How much better the health service is in the cities or villages are than they were in the time that, umm, the older people were young. The older people, people my age in their 40's, uhh, have known hunger in the past, uncertainty about the future and, umm, the children of this time, uhh, have been spared that, uhh, for the most part.

So I guess, it seems to me that, umm--that the people here believe. They believe in, uhh, the righteousness of, uhh, their purpose, and that uhh, it is an irresistible force. [recording ends]